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Science

In Aristasia Pura there was no Rationalist Revolution. In the West, and particularly in Novaria, the traditional, metaphysical view of the universe was extended into the more materially-oriented investigations of the late Age of Iron, creating a science and technics in some respects similar to those of late Telluria, but implying no radical ideological break with the traditional world-view.

Aristasian rejection of the rationalist-revolutionary outlook has prompted superficial critics to suppose that Aristasia-in-Telluria is "anti-scientific".

Is Aristasia Anti-Scientific?

In order to answer this, we must first ask: what do we mean by the word "scientific"? Do we mean the 19th-century mechanistic-materialistic world-picture that forms the basis of most people's day-to-day interpretation of the world, but which was already becoming redundant by the end of the 19th century and which relativity and quantum mechanics have completely overturned?

By a "pro-scientific" person, do we mean the sort of person who declares that "there are no such things as ghosts or fairies" from a vague and general prejudice that anything that doesn't appear in a school textbook cannot exist? Do we mean a modern fundamentalist who fears astrology and homoeopathy from a strange, superstitious adherence to the story-book picture of 19th-century mechanist-materialism which was unknown to earlier Protestants and is discredited by modern scientists?

What, in any case, is the Aristasian view? Well, it is true that a lot of Aristasians object to the use of the word "science" pure and simple (which means simply "knowledge") to describe a purely material discipline which was formerly known more accurately by such names as "physical science" or "natural philosophy".

Aristasians oppose the rationalistic doctrine which states that our only sources of knowledge are the five senses and the

action of the brain on the data provided by them. Some ill-educated people believe that this doctrine is "scientific" or even that it is the basis of "science". It is not. It is a creed or dogma professed by people known as rationalists or positivists. The only thing it has in common with material science is that that discipline (or group of disciplines) restricts itself to the sense-data and the workings of the reason upon them. No serious philosopher of science would claim that this in any way proves that the sense-data tell us all that exists, any more than an anatomist would claim that there is nothing outside the human body.

Unfortunately, a large number of semi-educated people - including some unphilosophical scientists - believe that "science" proves that there is nothing beyond the material: which is rather like believing that plane geometry proves that there is no third dimension.

Aristasia has no quarrel whatever with the claims of "science" within its own domain (always remembering that, according to the empirical philosophy on which this "science" is founded such claims can only ever be provisional and based on varying degrees of probability). We do deny all claims of "science" to pronounce on matters beyond its domain - as would any serious philosopher of "science".

We may also analyse "scientific" questions from the standpoint of traditional philosophy and metaphysics, asking how they fit into the larger picture of the universe, physical and non-physical. And we do ultimately assert the primacy of metaphysics over science - the former being based on First Principles and the latter being only a series of provisional hypotheses based on our very limited human senses.

In the last analysis, if "science" contradicts metaphysics, then "science" must clearly be wrong. But in fact much of the time it is right, as one would expect from a precise observation of the workings of the material world. When it is wrong, the errors often spring from confusing genuine perception and analysis with the doctrinal statements of rationalism and the emotional and mythologising needs of a rationalistic society. The theory of evolution is a case in point here. The story-picture provided by "evolution" is crucial to the modern world-myth, which is why the theory has resisted the radical overhauls that took place in other scientific spheres during the 20th century, adhering rigidly to a 19th-century model despite the overwhelming evidence against it. But here we are in the realm of pseudo-theology rather than "science".

See Also

The Big Bang

Creationism

The Philosophy of Numbers and Measurements

Relativity and the Speed of Light

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